

Message Text

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SUBJ: MARINE AIRBASING REQUIREMENTS IN NORWAY

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1. IN 1973/1974, A COORDINATED DECISION WAS TAKEN
BY CINCEUR/JCS/STATE/DEFENSE TO SEPARATE EUCOM/USAFE
WARTIME USE OF FOUR COBS FROM MARINE AIRWING BASING
REQUIREMENTS, A NATO CONTINGENCY UTILIZING SACLANT
ASSETS. EMBASSY OSLO HEARTILY CONCURRED IN THAT
DECISION AND SUCCESSFUL BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS OF COB AGREEMENT
BETWEEN USAFE AND CHOD NORWAY WERE SOON COMPLETED.

2. WE NOW UNDERSTAND THAT A NUMBER OF RECENT DISCUSSIONS AND
MEETINGS AT EUCOM CONSIDERED MARINE AIR BASING REQUIREMENTS IN
NORWAY AND PROPOSED THAT SUCH NEGOTIATIONS
SHOULD BE CONDUCTED ON A BILATERAL BASIS RATHER THAN IN NATO
CHANNELS. THERE HAS APPARENTLY BEEN NO NEW GUIDANCE FROM WASH-

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INGTON ON THE PROBLEM THAT WOULD ALTER THE PREVIOUS DECISION.

TO CONDUCT SUCH TALKS IN NATO CHANNELS ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND USCINCEUR HAS REQUESTED NEW GUIDANCE.

3. ALL ELEMENTS OF THIS MISSION STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE A SERIOUS ERROR TO TRANSFER NEGOTIATIONS FOR MARINE AIRWING BASING FROM NATO TO BILATERAL CHANNELS. FIRST, AND MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, IT WILL BE EASIER FOR THE PRESENT NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT TO CONDUCT SENSITIVE NEGOTIATIONS ON BASE MATTERS FOR SACLANT FORCES IN A NATO CONTEXT WHERE THE POLITICAL LIABILITIES WOULD BE MORE MANAGEABLE. TO DISCUSS THE AIRWING BASING THROUGH BILATERAL CHANNELS RISKS PLAYING STRAIGHT INTO THE HANDS OF THE VOCAL ANTI-NATO MINORITY HERE WHICH COULD DISTORT THE TALKS IN THE PUBLIC'S EYE TO MAKE THEM APPEAR TO RUN COUNTER TO NORWAY'S WELL-KNOWN BASE POLICY --NO FOREIGN TROOPS ON NORWEGIAN SOIL IN PEACETIME. CONTRARILY, TO CONDUCT THE TALKS UNDER THE NATO SHIELD MAKES THEM A MORE DIFFICULT TARGET.

4. SECONDLY, THE MARINE FORCES IN QUESTION FALL WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF NATO CONTINGENCY PLANS EXERCISED BY SACLANT AND SACEUR (THROUGH SACEUR STRATEGIC RESERVE) WHEREAS THE COB AGREEMENT DEALS LARGELY WITH USAF AND US AUGMENTATION FORCES. LOGIC ALSO THEREFORE DICTATES THE USE OF NATO CHANNELS TO NEGOTIATE THE AIRWING BASING PROGRAM.

5. AFNORTH WOULD THUS APPEAR TO BE A LOGICAL FORUM FOR THE NEGOTIATION OF NATO CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR MAF AIRWING BASING IN NORWAY.

6. IN LIGHT OF ACUTE POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF THE ISSUE, WE WOULD APPRECIATE (A) BEING KEPT FULLY INFORMED OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND (B) SECSTATE/SECDEF REACTION TO OUR VIEWS.
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